India's discussion with US on trips

357. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA:
SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA:
SHRI M. A. BABY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US representative M/s. Carla Hills visited New Delhi on October 6-7, 1991, to thrash out the issues relating ongoing disputes over trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) with US;

(b) if so, what specific cases were discussed during her visit indicating precisely the dispute that have persisted and how they are sought to be resolved;

(c) what further steps are being taken to finally resolve the issues, before the deadline set for action under US-trade law "Special 301";

(d) whether U.S.A. has agreed to resolve the restrictions imposed under Super 301 on India; and

(e) what are the details of the terms and conditions agreed to by both the countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The United States Trade Representative, M/s. Carla Hills, visited India from 4—8 October, 1991 During her visit she held discussions on issues being negotiated in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations as well as the process of economic reforms under way in India. In respect of the Uruguay Round negotiations, the issues discussed include Trade in Textiles, Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Trade Related issues. Investment Measures (TRIMs), and the rule-making issues. On the issue of Textiles, the Indian side expressed unhappiness over the roll-over of the Multi-Fibre Agreement upto 31 December, 1992 without any improvements and sought improved market access for India's textiles exports. The need to make the process of phase-cut of the MFA creditable and irreversible was emphasised. The US side indicated that they were prepared to examine the Indian request.

On the issue of TRIPs, the two sides has detailed discussions on copyright, trade marks as well as enforcement against infringement of copyright and differences were narrowed considerably. On the issue of patents, no new point was raised and the two sides agreed to let the matter rest for the present. The issue of TRIMs was discussed in the light of recent changes in India's policy towards foreign direct investment.

(c) The two sides have agreed to remain in touch with each other.

(d) No restrictions were imposed on India under Super 301. The Super 301 provisions of the U.S. Trade and Competitiveness Act, 1988 lapsed on 31-12-1990.

(e) Does not arise.

Impact of Indo-Soviet Trade on Imports of non-ferrous metals due to loose Federation of Soviet Union

358. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent developments in USSR, culminating into the formation of a loose federation of Soviet Union, have had or are likely to have any adverse impact on imports of non-ferrous metals from Soviet suppliers;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps, if any, taken to tackle the situatiion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The process of economic restructuring in the Soviet Union has had a negative impact on the supply of non-ferrous metals by Soviet suppliers. As per the LGCIS provisional statistics the import of non-ferrous metals stood at Rs. 24.86 crores only during January-August 1991 as against about Rs. 59.97 crores during the same period in 1990. The matter has been taken up with the Soviet Authorities.

Retaliatory Trade action against India due to violation of U.S. Trade Law

359. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received any communication from U.S. Government with regard to taking action against India for violations of the Special 301 clause of U.S. trade law; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Indo-Soviet Trade Agreement

360. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an uncertainty over the Indo-Soviet rupee trade agreement as per the news-item entitled "Political uncertainty hits Indo-Soviet Trade' which appeared in the Hindustan Times of the 1st September, 1991;

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard;

(c) whether there is any insistence on the part of the Soviet Union to trade in hard currency; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard so that the Indo-Soviet trade flow does not suffer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The Agreement between India and the USSR providing for trade in non-convertible Indian rupees is valid up to 31st December, 1995. The rapid and structural economic and political changes taking place in the Soviet economy may however necessitate some changes in the trading format for ensuring smooth continuance of trade.

(c) No such proposal has been received.

(d) Does not arise.

Ban on export of finished leather

361. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Financial Express of the 19th September, 1991, captioned "Ban on finished leather export"; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to help the exporters who have already committed export-orders with foreign buyers before such ban?